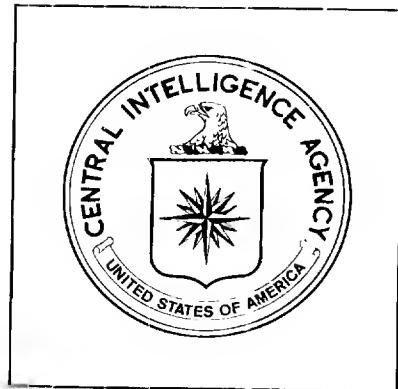


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WESTERN EUROPE – CANADA – INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Western Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

CONTENTS

French Communist Union Chief To Meet with European Confederation Leader	1
Belgian Government Faces New Crisis	3
Discussion of European Communist Conference Continues	5
Political Infighting Plagues Turkish Government Coalition	7

November 5, 1975

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25X1A

French Communist Union Chief To Meet with
European Confederation Leader

European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) President Vetter--after a deliberate delay of nearly a year--has set up a meeting in Brussels next week with Georges Seguy, the secretary general of the Communist-dominated French General Confederation of Labor (CGT).

ETUC sources point out that the meeting should not be seen as the start of negotiations on the CGT's membership bid as Vetter has no mandate or authority to make commitments. Despite this apparent effort to play down the meeting, we share the view of the US Mission in Brussels that the CGT already has sufficient support to assure its eventual affiliation.

The ETUC Presidium agreed last December that Vetter should tell Seguy that the CGT's application will not be considered as long as it retains full membership in the Communist-controlled World Confederation of Trade Unions (WFTU.) This policy was reaffirmed in February by the ETUC executive committee.

Vetter's delay in arranging the meeting reportedly results largely from differences within the West German Trade Union Federation (DGB) over the matter. The powerful metalworkers' chief, Eugene Loederer, fiercely opposes CGT membership and he has reportedly told Vetter--who is also the DGB President--that he'll face a political crisis in the German union unless he blocks the CGT. Another reason for the delay is the lack of pressure on

November 5, 1975

its behalf by the CGT's supporters, who have been undercut by the obstructionist role the French union has followed in those EC bodies in which it is represented.

Emotions run deep within ETUC over the CGT's bid, although a majority of the affiliates are either unopposed or openly in favor of admission. Strongly against are such members as the French Force Ouvriere, the Dutch Protestant Union (CNV), the Belgian Christian Federation (CSC), and the DGB. The Communist-dominated Italian Confederation of Labor (CGIL) lowered its WFTU membership status to "associate" and was consequently admitted to ETUC last year. Although the Italian group is privately passing the word that it will firmly oppose CGT membership until it also loosens its WFTU ties, it is unlikely that it would vote against the CGT in a showdown vote and has reportedly so informed the French.

The CGT's most vocal supporters include the British Trades Union Congress (TUC), the Belgian Socialist Federation (FGTB), and certain of the Scandinavian unions.

For its part, the CGT has blatantly flaunted its close relationship with WFTU. Last June, for example, it played up the WFTU general council meeting in Paris as the most important event in the CGT's anniversary celebrations. Seguy also reportedly boasted to an Italian communist official early this year that the CGT would "never" change its WFTU status, since it was certain that persistence alone would eventually wear down the opposition.
(**SECRET NOFORN/ORCON/USIBONLY/NOCONTRACT**)

November 5, 1975

25X1A


Belgian Government Faces New Crisis

Talks between union and employer representatives broke down on November 3, increasing the possibility of strikes in key Belgian industries that could threaten the stability of the Tindemans government.

The negotiations were being conducted more or less within the framework of the government's proposed income restraint bill, aimed at curtailing inflation by permitting only cost of living wage increases. The breakdown occurred when the employers' representatives balked at union demands that industries set up "solidarity funds" to finance early retirement. The employers argued that rising domestic inflation is rapidly pricing Belgian products out of the world market. Although early retirement funds are less inflationary than unrestricted wage increases, they would, of course, contribute to the problem.

The government may have to revise its income restraints bill to include some concessions for the unions. The US Embassy feels that Tindemans may have to allow for the establishment of solidarity funds. In any event, Tindemans may have difficulty getting a majority in parliament for anti-inflationary legislation, as both the government and the opposition are split internally over the issue.

The current impasse is the latest in a series of economic "crises" that have threatened the Tindemans government since it came to power 18 months ago. A seemingly endless number of strikes have plagued the government. A two-month long strike by barge owners and operators was recently settled by limited concessions to the strikers. The barge strike

November 5, 1975

was immediately followed by a one-day strike by truckers who may force the government to make major concessions in their case. Such action probably would cause the barge owners and operators to go out again in the hope that they, too, would receive further concessions. (CONFIDENTIAL NOFORN)

November 5, 1975

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Discussion of European Communist Conference
Continues

Belgrade has again strongly emphasized the unity of views among the independent European Communist parties who most actively oppose Soviet pretensions to a leadership role in the communist movement.

Belgrade Tanjug on Tuesday broadcast a long report on a recent plenum of the Italian Party central committee that approved a report by the leadership on preparations for the European Communist conference. According to Tanjug, Giancarlo Pajetta, secretary for interparty relations, presented conditions for Italian attendance that dovetail with the Yugoslav stand. Pajetta's view is that the conference "could be held" late this year or early next, but that many problems remain unsolved.

The Italians insist that "it is necessary explicitly to confirm that a single center or a leading party cannot exist" and to reject "the importation of a foreign model of socialism." Moreover, Pajetta asserted that "all forms of organizational ties" with overtones of obligations must be rejected. Tanjug also says the report stressed that the final conference document must be acceptable in toto to all parties. Pajetta also said that it should not attempt to gloss over irreconcilable differences, thereby leading to ideological confusion. Belgrade's leading spokesman on inter-party matters last week repeated virtually every aspect of the Italian demands.

November 5, 1975

The Italian party has also introduced a new issue that the Soviets and their loyalist supporters will hotly contest. It wants any statement on European economic trends to stress that Eastern and Western economies are troubled by the same problems. This position clashes with Soviet propaganda claims that the CEMA countries, thanks to their superior systems and beneficial economic links with Moscow, have been insulated from economic shocks. Such a frank discussion of Eastern problems at an open European forum would be political dynamite for many Eastern European regimes, not to mention the Kremlin, and there is virtually no chance that Moscow will accede to this demand.

In addition to publicizing the Italian party's stand, the Belgrade party weekly Komunist this week also carried a long interview with Santiago Carrillo, the secretary general of the independent Spanish party. Carrillo stressed his party's admiration of Yugoslavia's successful break with Moscow in 1948 and asserted his party's independence from any foreign pressures. Carrillo, fresh from talks with Romania's Ceausescu, also restated his intention to pursue a role for his Communists in a multi-party system in the post-Franco era.

At the next preparatory meeting which is to be held between November 10 and 20, the more independent parties apparently hope the date for the European Communist conference will be set for late December or early January. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] believes that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, however, "would not now mind" if the conference is not convened until after its 25th congress.

(SECRET NOFORN/ORCON/USIBONLY/NOCONTRACT)

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November 5, 1975

25X1A

Political Infighting Plagues Turkish Government Coalition

The lack of cohesion in Turkish Prime Minister Demirel's coalition government has been underscored this week by repeated failures of the lower house of parliament to elect a presiding officer.

The election of a speaker is normally a non-event subject to a gentlemen's agreement that has given the post to the numerically strongest party in each house. In this session of the parliament it has become the focal point of disagreement among the various coalition parties and their independent supporters.

Demirel would probably prefer to bow to tradition and allow opposition leader Ecevit's Republican People's Party to hold the speaker's post in the lower house. This would avert an attempt by Ecevit to retaliate in the upper house, where Demirel's party would normally win the honor.

The Prime Minister may, however, be forced to precipitate a conflict with Ecevit by his troublesome coalition partner, National Salvation Party leader Erbakan, who is currently looking for an issue to strengthen his own political base. Erbakan's challenge may be coordinated with that of nine independent parliamentary deputies, whose votes are important to the government's ability to survive a confidence vote.

Erbakan appears to favor electing a speaker of the lower house from among coalition party deputies or independents who support the government. He met

November 5, 1975

last weekend with four of the nine independents and agreed to convey to other coalition partners their demand for election of one of their group as speaker. The independents are also demanding at least one Cabinet seat in return for continued support of the government.

Leaders of all the coalition parties met today amidst public statements by Demirel and other coalition loyalists touting the government's stability. Their talks probably focused both on internal differences--including Erbakan's recent demands that unfulfilled coalition programs be implemented--and on the demands of the independents. The coalition will probably have to accommodate the independents, at least in part, but any compromise the various factions reach is likely to be fragile.

As Demirel works to hold his government together, he must also be alert to renewed violence at Turkey's universities. The incidents this year have focused--as they did in 1974--largely on student and faculty grievances and residual hostility between rival left and right-wing student groups. Nevertheless, the confrontations could take on greater political coloration--potentially of an anti-US nature--later in the school year and again spill over into the national political arena. (CONFIDENTIAL)

November 5, 1975

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